Multiple Award Schedule for Interoperable Geospatial Portal Components

Background - Governments at all levels are major providers and consumers of geospatial data and information and have long sought to facilitate higher levels of interoperability among Geographic Information Systems. The U.S. Federal Government has recent experience in specifying Geospatial Portal Software, especially as part of the interagency "e-Government" project known as the "Geospatial One-Stop". In collaboration with the General Services Administration (GSA), this recent experience will be used to establish a contracting vehicle for governments to acquire products that comply with interoperability standards.

Objective - The objective is to institute a contracting vehicle for organizations at all levels of government that need standards-based geospatial interoperability in their implementation of portals and other facilities. The contracting vehicle is expected to be a GSA Multiple Award Schedule contract for Interoperable Geospatial Portal Components. Technical specification of that contract will be developed by an expert team in collaboration with GSA. The technical specifications will define components of a geospatial portal that is easy to use, component-based, services-oriented, and interoperable where standardized services are defined.

Approach – Development of the contract technical specifications requires an evaluation of usability features for geospatial portals as well as a delineation of component technical requirements common among interoperable geospatial portals. The contract technical specification will be developed by the end of 2003 by a team of 5-10 people. This team will include: typical users of geospatial portals; experts in information systems architecture, standards-based interoperability, and usability; and, persons involved in the Spatial Data Infrastructure Clearinghouse and the Geospatial One-Stop procurements. The team will base its work on the Geospatial One-Stop functional requirements and the Open GIS Consortium Portal Architecture document produced as part of that contracted work. Looking at the Geospatial One-Stop portal, www.geodata.gov, and other geospatial portals, the team will evaluate:

(1) how the key functional requirements of a geospatial portal should be specified in the contract technical specifications;
(2) what service interfaces and other standards should be specified, how they specifically interact, and how compliance with such standards should be ascertained; and,
(3) what usability characteristics should be highlighted in a comparison among geospatial portal component proposals.

Products and Review Process - The team will produce a contract technical specification document that will be used in the collaboration with GSA on establishing a Multiple Award Schedule contract for Interoperable Geospatial Portal Components. Insights and decisions surfaced through the evaluation will be aired regularly in a broad forum of interested parties. A draft technical specification will also be published for review; comments will be taken into account in the final technical specification document.

Proposed Timeline (NOTE: GSA has expressed "interest" but has not yet committed) -

9/11/2003	Agreement with GSA on strategy and timeline; project publicized
9/16/2003	GOS Board requested to nominate usability evaluators
October 2003	Usability evaluation sessions conducted
Oct – Nov 2003	Writing sessions for software technical specifications
Oct – Nov 2003	Writing sessions for usability characteristics
November 2003	Writing of specifications for support services (software development, integration, operations)
11/28/2003	Completion of software and support services specifications and usability characteristics
December 2003	Integration of GSA procurement document with developed software and support services specifications and usability characteristics
Dec 2003 - Mar 2004	GSA conducts Multiple Award Schedule contract competition
April 2004	GSA award of Multiple Award Schedule contract